

Review: Narrative Clip logs your life in photos

April 10 2014, by Ron Harris



A Narrative Clip life-logging device is worn on a shirt collar Wednesday, April 2, 2014 in Atlanta. The small, wearable camera takes a photo automatically every 30 seconds. (AP Photo/Ron Harris)

Ever had one of those "Gosh, I wish I had a camera" moments when something novel happens in your life? The Narrative Clip is a small, wearable camera that makes an attempt to capture some of those fleeting moments automatically.

The \$279 square device clips on to your shirt collar or jacket pocket and

takes a photo automatically every 30 seconds. That's more than 2,800 per day if you have it on around the clock.

The Narrative Clip doesn't have a shutter button or an on/off switch. It's just always on, always logging moments in your life.

It turns off only if you put it in your pocket, face down on a table or in a drawer. The battery lasts two days, but I threw it in a drawer at night so it never ran out of juice for me.

I wore the device for more than two weeks and got a middling mix of odd moments in line at Starbucks, blurred shots from a drive in my car and an occasional gem of my dog pulling me on a walk. Interesting moments indeed, but perhaps not crucial to re-live.

To view photos, I simply sync the device with a personal computer using a USB cable. Images are stored on your hard drive, and you can view them on your PC anytime.

You can also have copies stored through the device's online storage service. That's free for one year, but \$9 plus tax per month after that. The online service will let you browse your life moments through an app for iPhones and Android phones.

The mobile app is pretty slick. It's a breeze to swipe along a ribbon of thumbnails near the bottom and enlarge chosen moments for closer inspection. I'm able to share any of those photos from the app to Facebook and Twitter.

The quality of the photos varies depending on lighting, motion and the occasional blockage from my shirt collar. The majority of the shots taken with the device's 5 megapixel camera were blurry and comparable to an entry-level pocket digital camera.

Furthermore, most moments I had hoped it would capture didn't happen exactly as the shutter snapped every 30 seconds. Only a few did.

This, however, is life in motion. I move. I drive. I walk my dog. I even clipped the Narrative Clip on to my dog's harness for a while and let him document his life. I put the clip on a ledge near my home office window and let it capture a 30-second interval time-lapse of the morning sun.

The Narrative Clip doesn't position itself as the answer to all photographic needs. It couldn't.

More to its stated goal, the small square camera with a silver clip on the back is a travel buddy. It takes the odd shot of the odd moment and lets you browse through the images chronologically. There's no search function or anything like that.

The Narrative Clip doesn't solve anything, but it offers something: a new and interesting perspective of my daily habits.

It taught me that I sit too much, jaywalk too much, tend to avoid crowds and go to Starbucks a lot. These are moments that I would have never thought to take a photo of, but they are part of my existence, now recorded in imagery.

In all, the Narrative Clip is a polished attempt at doing what we don't always have time to do: chronicle our lives.

More information: getnarrative.com/

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